



Santa Barbara Friends Meeting/Truth in Recruitment
2012 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105
Statement to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Truth in Recruitment calls for the Abolition of the Selective Service System

November 12, 2019

Truth in Recruitment (TIR) is a project of the Santa Barbara Friends (Quaker) Meeting, a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Our goal is to educate students, families, and school districts about alternatives to military careers, inform families of their children's privacy rights, and advocate for policies regulating recruiter presence on campuses.

Truth in Recruitment sees the future of the Selective Service System, mandatory registration for military service, as a critical issue for the future of all residents of the United States of America and its territories. We will be voicing our concerns to National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (NCMNPS) commissioners, on a November 13, 2019 conference call, along with representatives of the Center on Conscience & War, CodePink, Courage to Resist, Resisters.info, Veterans for Peace, War Resisters League, and the Fellowship for Reconciliation.

Although expansion of the SSS mandatory registration to women has not yet been enacted, TIR is committed to support anyone who resists registering. After examining the questions on the website of the NCMNPS, here are our recommendations:

- We call for the abolition of the Selection Service System and commit ourselves to work with renewed dedication to abolish it. We shall oppose attempts to expand SSS mandatory registration, however constructive the alleged purpose. We do not support efforts at reform; the issue is not equal treatment under compulsion, but freedom from compulsion.
- There is no need for conscription. Since the disaster of 9-11, enlistment has filled the military's quotas for recruits. SSS registration should be discontinued.
- It is especially egregious to have this program continue without a choice to declare oneself a conscientious objector.
- Penalties for noncompliance should be proportional to the harm of the noncompliance. There should not be lifelong disabilities, i.e. registration linked to the ability to get a driver's license, or to qualify for financial aid in advanced education or governmental employment. Removal of such penalties should be retroactive.
- Representing a community with a large immigrant population, we feel it is particularly important to remove the disqualification for residents and undocumented people from the ability to apply for citizenship if they have not registered with the SSS. Removal of such penalties should also be retroactive.

- While it might be said that the barriers to military service are issues such as a lack of awareness of the requirement to register or a physical disability, barriers may also include matters of conscience, for example being required to serve in undeclared, unconstitutional military actions, loss of freedom, loss of educational opportunities, endangered health, changes in family, personal necessities, development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Moral Injury, Military Sexual Assault, statistically higher chances for becoming suicidal, and violation of personal life philosophies.
- All of the barriers to service can be mitigated by transferring large parts of the military budget to public education, health care, infrastructure, and fulfilling the needs of a modern society.

We have observed the commission closely and are deeply concerned about what the commission may recommend to the US Congress in 2020. In April 2019, Truth in Recruitment members Kate Connell, TIR director and parent of two draft age young adults; Arianna Standish, University of California at Berkeley student; and Callum Standish, Castro Valley, California high school student, traveled to Washington D.C. for the NCMNPS Selective Service Hearings. They made public comment at the hearings: *How to Meet Potential National Mobilization Needs*, on April 24, and *Should Registration be Expanded to All Americans*, on April 25. Previously, on September 20, 2018, Ms. Connell, along with TIR members Joe Asebedo, Marine Corps veteran and Veterans for Peace Ventura Chapter vice president, Michael Cervantes, Veterans for Peace Ventura Chapter president, and Michael Meredith, former educator, traveled to give testimony at the NCMNPS public meeting at the California State University, Los Angeles Campus. We appreciate that the commission has asked to hear from those who are calling for the elimination of the SSS. We believe that these groups represent the voices of the majority of Americans who believe in voluntary service and freedom from compulsion for all.

Respectfully submitted,

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